SCENE 1

(The classroom at The Exceptional Childhood Center, a highly competitive preschool for exceptional children. There are various preschool toy boxes and two tables, one of which is covered in shaving cream.)

(Sudden spotlight on REGGIE as he looks up and out to the audience.)

MS. PATTERSON'S VOICE: (Cheery, welcoming:) Hello, scholar! You must be Reggie Watson. Welcome to the Exceptional Childhood Center. My name is Ms. Patterson. Now remember, it is your first day, so I want to see you on your best behavior.

REGGIE: (To Ms. Patterson, nervously:) Thank you, Mrs. Patterson.

MS. PATTERSON'S VOICE: (Suddenly stern:) It's Ms. Patterson, Reggie.

REGGIE: (In spotlight, to the audience:) If there's anything that life has taught me so far, it's that your future is determined at birth. Or actually, in my case, determined before birth, since my parents put me on the waiting list for the Exceptional Childhood Center before I was even conceived. Then, one day, after my parents' amicable divorce and healthy co-parenting arrangement, a miracle happened: an opening appeared and my name took a magnificent journey from the top of the waiting list to the bottom of the accepted list. Here I am now: entering the third most prestigious preschool in the nation midyear. My hair is combed, my lunch is packed, and if I can just make it through today, I'll be — (Comforted by the words:) — set for life. I have one day to prove that I'm exceptional. No mistakes, no tantrums, no...accidents. It all starts here.

(Lights come up, SUSAN enters stage left carrying her backpack)
and several picture books.)

REGGIE: (Suddenly noticing her:) Oh, hi there! Are you in this class too?

SUSAN: Yes. My name is Susan Crawford. You must be the new student.

REGGIE: Yeah, I'm Reggie Watson. Wow...those books look like they have some big words in them.

SUSAN: I take pride in my education, Reginald. If I don't get the most out of preschool, my future self will surely regret it. And I can't waste my highly gifted status that my parents always brag about.

(Susan puts her things down upstage as AIDEN enters stage right, FRANKIE excitedly squeezing his hand.)

AIDEN: Ah, the ol' schoolhouse.

REGGIE: Hi, I'm Reggie, the new student.

AIDEN: The first day at The Exceptional Childhood Center. The most terrifying trial period in existence. One strike and you're out of here.

(Sees Reggie freaking out.)

But what do I know? I got in because I'm a legacy, like my little bro Frankie. Just remember, if you got problems, you come to me. Repeating the same class two years in a row pumps a lot of wisdom into you.

SUSAN: Now if only Aiden would channel that "wisdom" into controlling his tantrums, he might actually graduate.

AIDEN: For your information, I've learned my lesson. I am now a master of self-control.

FRANKIE: (To Reggie:) Don't listen to her. Aiden is the
smartest and coolest and most awesomest big brother ever!

(Aiden goes upstage with Frankie following close behind and haphazardly throws his backpack down as ZIVA enters stage left.)

ZIVA: (Seeing Reggie, very cryptic:) You're not Trevor...

REGGIE: Trevor?

SUSAN: The kid you replaced. He wasn't a fit for the school. Culled from the herd, as it were.

AIDEN: I heard he was kicked out for saying a bad word! (Whispering:) Bosoms!

FRANKIE: Bosoms isn't a bad word.

AIDEN: Yes it is. I've traveled life's road two years longer than you, Frankie. (Whispering:) Bosoms— (Not whispering:) —is a bad word.

FRANKIE: You're right, Aiden. You always are.

ZIVA: (Dryly:) I heard he killed a guy.

FRANKIE: Aiden, she's scaring me!

(Frankie runs and cowers behind Aiden.)

REGGIE: (To Ziva, rather nervously:) Hey, I never caught your name.

ZIVA: (Not looking at him:) It's Ziva. But a name is just a label, a sticker ever so casually slapped onto the individual, disguising his or her true character. Now if you'll excuse me, I have Barbies to decapitate.

REGGIE: ...How did she get into the school?

AIDEN: Her parents are big donors. You're standing in the Ziva Collins Playroom of Smiles.
(Susan, Aiden, Frankie, and Ziva all sit down on the floor, Aiden and Frankie playing with various toys, Susan reading one of her books, and Ziva rearranging the limbs of Barbie dolls.)

REGGIE: So...may I parallel play with you guys?


REGGIE: You can read? Are we supposed to know how to do that already!?

SUSAN: Let me put it this way: Trevor couldn't read.

AIDEN: He was kicked out, remember? *(Whispering:)* Bosoms!

ZIVA: Killed a guy. The sea ran red with his blood.

FRANKIE: I heard aliens came down and took him to their planet and put him in a people zoo but he escaped and flew to the sun!

AIDEN: *(To Frankie:)* Where'd you hear that?

FRANKIE: The boy's room.

AIDEN: What are you talking about? You don't use the boy's room. You're not even potty trained. You still wear diapers.

FRANKIE: *Ahem*...pull ups.

REGGIE: Wow, if they can just kick someone out like that, I better watch my step! I could be next! I need to completely apply myself to being a good fit for this school.

AIDEN: Then just don't say — *(Whispering:)* —Bosoms.

ZIVA: And don't burn down an orphanage.

FRANKIE: I thought you said Trevor killed a guy.

ZIVA: How do you think he did it?